



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

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Be a Part of Quality First!

Quality First is Arizona's voluntary quality improvement and rating system for early care and education programs serving children birth through age five. The purpose of Quality First is to improve the quality of early care and education so young children can begin school safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

Why is Participation Important? Quality improvements in early care and education are good for Arizona's future. Studies have shown that quality programs result in better school readiness, improved high school graduation rates, college attendance and higher earnings as adults, along with lower rates of involvement in juvenile delinquency and crime, less grade repetition, and less remedial education.

Who Can Participate? Any regulated center or home in Arizona is eligible for Quality First! The state is providing financial support for 300 settings (200 centers and 100 homes) statewide with additional settings in certain regions funded by First Things First Regional Partnership Councils. The benefits of participation in Quality First include:

- Financial incentives for three years to help reach quality milestones
- Access to professional development and T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Project scholarships
- Access to child care health consultants; experts in child health issues
- Coaching, individualized to provider needs
- Observational assessments to obtain a baseline and measure quality improvements
- Ability to use participation as a marketing tool with families looking for quality programs for their children.

How to Apply: Participation in Quality First involves an application process. Selection is based on a number of criteria such as geographic location and numbers of low-income children served. Applications will be accepted beginning January 12, 2009 with the first round of selections made on March 2, 2009 (in the event of a tied score, preference will be determined by the date a completed application is received or post-marked).

Applications can be completed on-line, downloaded from the First Things First website and mailed in, or requested by mail after January 12, 2009. If you do not have internet access, you can make an appointment with the First Things First Regional Coordinator, Rochelle Lacapa to utilize a computer with internet access to complete your application. Applications will continue to be accepted past the March 2 selection date to fill future openings.

If you are a regulated center or home and are interested in learning more about Quality First, please feel free to contact Rochelle Lacapa at (928) 532-5041 or via email at rlacapa@azftf.gov.